# General Assembly

Distr.: General
20 February 2002

**Fifty-sixth session**
Agenda item 119 (*b*)

## Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*on the report of the Third Committee (A/56/583/Add.2)*]

### 56/162. Effective promotion of the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities

*The General Assembly*,

*Recalling* its resolution 47/135 of 18 December 1992, as well as its subsequent resolutions on the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities,

*Considering* that the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities contribute to political and social stability and peace and enrich the cultural diversity and heritage of society as a whole in the States in which such persons live,

*Concerned* by the frequency and severity of disputes and conflicts concerning minorities in many countries and their often tragic consequences, and concerned also that persons belonging to minorities are particularly vulnerable to displacement through, inter alia, population transfers, refugee flows and forced relocation,

*Recognizing* that the effective promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities is a fundamental part of the promotion and protection of human rights, and acknowledging that measures in this area can also contribute significantly to conflict prevention,

*Emphasizing* the importance of human rights education as an effective tool to promote an inclusive society and understanding of and tolerance towards and among persons belonging to minorities,

*Acknowledging* that the United Nations has an important role to play regarding the protection of minorities by, inter alia, taking due account of and giving effect to the Declaration,

*Noting* that the Working Group on Minorities of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights held its sixth and seventh sessions from 22 to 26 May 2000[1] and 14 to 18 May 2001,[2] respectively,

---

[1] E/CN.4/Sub.2/2000/27 and Corr.1.

[2] E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/22.

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General;[3]

2. *Recognizes* that respect for human rights and the promotion of understanding and tolerance by Governments as well as between and among minorities are central to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities;

3. *Reaffirms* the obligation of States to ensure that persons belonging to minorities may exercise fully and effectively all human rights and fundamental freedoms without any discrimination and in full equality before the law, in accordance with the Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities,[4] and as emphasized at the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, held at Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 8 September 2001;

4. *Urges* States and the international community to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, as set out in the Declaration, including through the provision of adequate education and the facilitation of their participation in all aspects of the political, economic, social, religious and cultural life of society and in the economic progress and development of their country, and to apply a gender perspective while doing so;

5. *Calls upon* States to give special attention to the promotion and protection of the human rights of children, girls as well as boys, belonging to minorities;

6. *Urges* States to take, as appropriate, all necessary constitutional, legislative, administrative and other measures to promote and give effect to the Declaration, and appeals to States to cooperate bilaterally and multilaterally, in accordance with the Declaration, in order to promote and protect the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;

7. *Calls upon* States to take all appropriate measures to protect the cultural and religious sites of national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;

8. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to make available, at the request of Governments concerned, qualified expertise on minority issues, including the prevention and resolution of disputes, to assist in existing or potential situations involving minorities;

9. *Calls upon* the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to promote, within her mandate, the implementation of the Declaration and to continue to engage in a dialogue with Governments for that purpose, and in this regard draws attention to the work on the United Nations Guide for Minorities;

10. *Requests* the High Commissioner to continue her efforts to improve the coordination and cooperation among United Nations programmes and agencies on activities related to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to minorities and to take the work of relevant regional organizations active in the field of human rights into account in her endeavours;

---

[3] A/56/258.

[4] Resolution 47/135, annex.

11. *Welcomes* the inter-agency consultation of the High Commissioner with United Nations programmes and agencies on minority issues, and calls upon those programmes and agencies to contribute actively to this process;

12. *Invites* the human rights treaty bodies, when considering reports submitted by States parties, as well as the reports of special representatives, special rapporteurs and working groups of the Commission on Human Rights, to continue to give attention, within their respective mandates, to situations and rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;

13. *Encourages* intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations to continue to contribute to the promotion and protection of the rights of persons belonging to national or ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities;

14. *Calls upon* the Working Group on Minorities of the Subcommission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights to implement further its mandate with the involvement of a wide range of participants;

15. *Invites* the High Commissioner to seek voluntary contributions to facilitate the effective participation, including through training seminars, in the work of the Working Group on Minorities of representatives of non-governmental organizations and persons belonging to minorities, in particular those from developing countries;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report to the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session on the implementation of the present resolution, and to continue to include examples of good practices in the field of education and of the effective participation of minorities in decision-making processes;

17. *Decides* to continue consideration of this question at its fifty-eighth session under the item entitled "Human rights questions".

*88th plenary meeting*
*19 December 2001*